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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ALLEGES TORTURE IN JORDAN

REF: AMMAN 4982

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador David Hale for  
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Human Rights Watch released a report accusing Jordan's lead security service of mistreating detainees. The government's official spokesman said Jordan will study the report and reply; GID officials and pro-government media attacked the report as baseless or politically motivated. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On September 19, the New-York based Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report that accused the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) of abusing detainees. Note: The GID is Jordan's lead intelligence and internal security agency. End note. The 66-page report was entitled &Suspicious Sweeps: The General Intelligence Department and Jordan's Rule of Law Problem<sup>8</sup>. Allegations include arbitrary arrest, lack of due process, absence of judicial review, detention without charge, and torture. The report was based on interviews with 16 former detainees, and was initially slated to cover only cases of arbitrary arrests. However, lead researcher Christoph Wilcke, who is based at HRW headquarters in New York, told polcouns September 20 that prisoner abuse and torture became a recurring theme in his interviews. &Fifteen out of 16 interviewees mentioned torture.<sup>8</sup> Wilcke went on to emphasize that his interviews were impromptu and unscheduled, and that because his study was focused on detainees whom GID released and did not refer to prosecutors, his interviewees had no stake in making false accusations.

¶3. (C) In addition to the allegations of abuse, the report also focused on the methods the GID uses in arrest and detention, specifically a lack of due process. Wilcke said that none of the 16 subjects he interviewed, after their arrest, were allowed access to an attorney, contact with their family, or the opportunity to prepare a defense. Additionally, GID released 13 out of the 16 interviewed without referring them to prosecutors. Wilcke interpreted this to mean that the subjects had either been arbitrarily arrested, or that the state lacked evidence to mount a case against them. Wilcke said the GID has been &lazy<sup>8</sup> in gathering evidence, instead preferring to cast a broad net of arrests and &to ask questions later.<sup>8</sup>

¶4. (C) Wilcke repeatedly emphasized to polcouns that the report was not intended to question the existence or value of GID. &Intelligence is important, and in Jordan doubly so,<sup>8</sup> but he argued that holding the GID to international standards would lead it &to get the right guys with good evidence.<sup>8</sup>

¶5. (C) On September 18, HRW met with several senior GID officials, who denied that any abuses or violations of the law had occurred. Wilcke's delegation is scheduled to meet with GID director Major General Muhammad Dhahabi in the coming week.

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REACTIONS FROM GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA  
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16. (C) Jordanian officials have answered past allegations of torture by arguing that terrorists are trained to allege torture as a means of gaining public sympathy. Regarding the HRW report, Government Spokesman Nasser Judeh said that concerned parties and security forces would study the report thoroughly before formulating a response. Judeh also pointed to the GID's and other officials' willingness to meet with the researchers during their time in Amman as evidence of the GOJ's openness and transparency.

17. (U) The Public Freedoms and Citizen's Rights Committee of the Chamber of Deputies approved September 20 a resolution that denounced the HRW report as based on &suspicious sources<sup>8</sup> and &Untrue and illogical in word and spirit.<sup>8</sup> The rapporteur of the committee, MP Jamal Dmour, a Muslim East-Banker from Karak, went on to accuse the sources of the report's material as acting in return for &grants or financial support.<sup>8</sup> Dmour further identified his committee as the main authority on freedoms and rights in Jordan, and said it regularly visits detention centers, where he had seen no evidence of torture or of arbitrary arrest.

18. (U) Media reaction to the report has been mostly negative. During the press conference, reporters accused HRW of &serving the interests of America and Israel.<sup>8</sup> On Wednesday, September 20, The Jordan Times, an English language daily, ran a neutral article describing the release of the report. However, other papers with far greater readership have been more critical. Al-Rai, the leading pro-government Arabic language daily printed articles condemning the report as having a political agenda and calling HRW's allegations &delusional.<sup>8</sup>

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HRW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOJ  
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19. (SBU) HRW's report urged the GOJ to investigate claims of arbitrary arrest and prisoner abuse, and included these recommendations for the GOJ:

- to investigate the GID's arrest and detention practices, including the directorate's compliance with Jordanian laws and international human rights standards.
- To clarify in law the bases for intelligence officers' powers of arrest and detention
- To implement a moratorium on GID detentions
- To place all GID law enforcement activities under the supervision of a civilian prosecutor
- To suspend the operation of the State Security Court pending a review
- Ensure that pre-arraignment detention does not exceed 24 hours
- To amend the criminal code to provide for unqualified access to legal counsel without undue delay, to allow detainees to promptly petition and independent and impartial court to review the grounds for detention, and to make evidence obtained through abusive treatment inadmissible in court
- To ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading treatment or Punishment.

The HRW report further recommended that Parliament directly enhance the public defender program and create a standing committee for security and intelligence issues that oversees the GID.

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HRW ALSO URGES THE U.S. TO ACT  
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10. (U) In its September 19 press statement, HRW called upon President Bush to address the issues of rule of law and

prisoner abuse with King Abdullah during his visit to the U.S. that week.

¶11. (SBU) The report and visit from HRW came three months after the visit of Manfred Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur for Torture (reftel). Wilcke told polcouns that HRW is working on another report on Iraqi refugees in Jordan, which is due for release in approximately six weeks.

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